

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Kennecott Exploration 2012

Proposed Implementation Date: July 1, 2012

Proponent: Kennecott Exploration

Location: Section 36 T13N R15W, Section 16 T12N R15W, N/2, N/2 Section 21 T12N R15W, SE ¼ Section 24 T12N R15W.

County: Missoula and Granite

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Conducting a geophysical survey of mineral deposits.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project. List number of individuals contacted, number of responses received, and newspapers in which notices were placed and for how long. Briefly summarize issues received from the public.

Grazing licensees on the affected sections were contacted and a public meeting regarding the proposed project was conducted in Potomac, MT on May 31, 2012.

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

Examples: cost-share agreement with U.S. Forest Service, 124 Permit, 3A Authorization, Air Quality Major Open Burning Permit.

N/A

3. ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT:

Describe alternatives considered and, if applicable, provide brief description of how the alternatives were developed. List alternatives that were considered but eliminated from further analysis and why.

Alternative 1-No Action Alternative-the DNRC would not issue a Land Use License allowing the proposed exploration to occur.

Alternative 2-Action Alternative-DNRC would issue a Land Use License allowing Kennecott to conduct the proposed exploration on DNRC ownership.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to soils.

The proposed exploration would involve the hand excavation of approximately 9 test holes on DNRC ownership and presents a low risk of impacts..

Should the Action Alternative be implemented, the licensee would be required to:

1. Maintain road closures in existing condition, open or closed.
2. Avoid using those portions of the road system that cross clayey soils when wet.
3. Avoid rutting roads, and repair any damages caused by their operations.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:

Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to water resources.

Do to the upland nature of the proposed exploration sites and the minimal disturbance associated with the minor truck traffic and hand excavation of the proposed test sites, it is anticipated that implementation of the Action Alternative would present a low risk of impacts to the water resource within the proposed project area.

6. AIR QUALITY:

What pollutants or particulate would be produced (i.e. particulate matter from road use or harvesting, slash pile burning, prescribed burning, etc)? Identify the Airshed and Impact Zone (if any) according to the Montana/Idaho Airshed Group. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to air quality.

Implementation of the Action Alternative does not pose any risk of impacting air quality.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:

What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to vegetation.

The proposed exploration activities would involve the hand excavation of test sites approximately 18" – 20" in diameter and thus do not pose any risk of significant impacts to the vegetative community. Should the Action Alternative be implemented, the Licensee would be required to:

1. Control any noxious weeds which are introduced by the Licensee's activities.
2. To prevent introduction of new noxious weed, the Licensee would be required to clean any mud and/or plant material that may harbor weeds seeds from all equipment to be operated in conjunction with the proposed exploration.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

The proposed exploration activities would involve minimal excavation of the test site and short duration entries to the survey areas by humans, and thus do not present a strong likelihood of any lasting impacts to this resource. The minor truck traffic and hand excavation of the proposed test holes would present a low risk of impacts to the water resources and/or fisheries within the proposed project area.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

Resources of this type are not likely to be present in the area.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

Identify and determine direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

The DNRC Archaeologist did not find any reason for concern with implementation of the Action Alternative provided that it did not involve road or trail modification in the NESE of Section 16 T12N R15W.

11. AESTHETICS:

Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to aesthetics.

The minimal impact of the proposed exploration method is not likely to have any impact upon the aesthetics of the area should the Action Alternative be implemented.

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:

Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to environmental resources.

The proposed activities are not likely to have any measurable demands upon these resources.

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:

List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

N/A

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.• Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.• Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

N/A

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

N/A

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to the employment market.

N/A

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

N/A

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services

N/A

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:

List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

N/A

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:

Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

N/A

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to population and housing.

N/A

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

N/A

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

N/A

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:

Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

N/A

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Jonathan Hansen	Date: June 13, 2012
	Title: Missoula Unit Manager	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Alternative 2-Action Alternative

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

The minimal amount of disturbance related to the implementation of the Action Alternative is not likely to produce any measurable immediate or long-term impacts to the environment within the project area.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

☐ EIS ☐ More Detailed EA ☒ No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Anthony L. Liane
	Title: Southwest Area Manager
Signature: /S/ Anthony L. Liane	Date: June 18, 2012